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SUBJECT: SOMALIA: FRIENDS GROUP TOLD CREDIBILITY OF UNSC AT
STAKE; SANCTIONS AGAINST ERITREA QUESTIONED

Classified By: Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) for Somalia Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah met with the Friends of Somalia on November 20 at the Norwegian Mission. (NOTE: The Friends group includes Belgium, China, Croatia, Denmark, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Uganda, UK, and the U.S.) He warned that the fate of Somalia is at stake, as well as the credibility of the international community, particularly the UN Security Council. He called for a strategy that would implement fully the Djibouti Agreement, and suggested that anything short of supporting the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) would risk another failed attempt to bring stability to Somalia. He distributed a paper entitled "Implementation of the Djibouti Agreement" (text in para 8 below). Italy stressed that sanctions against Eritrea would be counterproductive. Eritrean PR Desta asked the SRSG for evidence that his country had sent arms and/or financed activities in Somalia and denied any involvement. Desta's statements echoed Eritrea's message to Ambassador DiCarlo during a November 18 bilateral meeting in which Desta complained that Eritrea is treated unfairly by the Security Council (beginning in para 9 below). END SUMMARY.

OULD-ABDALLAH REFLECTS ON SOMALIA,
CONFLICT IN GENERAL

12. (C) Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) for Somalia Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah in his meeting with the Friends of Somalia on November 20 took the opportunity to reflect on the two-decades of international involvement in Somalia, challenging the Friends to "get it right this time." He said the credibility of both the international community and the UN Security Council were at stake. He lamented that between \$6-8 billion spent over the last 15 years has perhaps accomplished nothing (although he acknowledged the important role of humanitarian aid). The SRSG worried that the right questions were not being asked, particularly what the international community wanted to achieve in Somalia.

13. (C) Ould-Abdallah said that the situation in Somalia is a threat to international peace and security. He wondered whether the international community's response to conflict was still stuck in the 1960s, when problems were inter-state (not internal).

14. (C) Ould-Abdallah also called for more bilateral assistance directly to the TFG's operating budget. He worried that trust funds and other financial arrangements, including the UN's assistance, were too slow in coming for

the government to use such monies to function. He thanked the U.S., Algeria, China, Djibouti, Kenya, Libya, and Yemen for their bilateral assistance. The SRSG also distributed to the Friends a paper entitled "Implementation of the Djibouti Agreement" (text in para 8 below).

SANCTIONS AGAINST ERITREA A SORE POINT

¶15. (C) Italian Deputy PermRep Gian Lorenzo Cornado read a prepared statement that called for action against spoilers, Djibouti Agreement implementation, and a UN mission to replace AMISOM. Cornado took special note of the spoiler issue, saying that UN sanctions against Eritrea at this point would be counterproductive. (COMMENT: Cornado sat next to Eritrean PermRep Araya Desta; the two engaged in whispered one-on-one conversation throughout the Friends meeting. Also, the UK expert in attendance shared after the meeting that Italy has demarched EU countries on this position. END COMMENT)

¶16. (C) Later in the meeting, Desta agreed with SRSG Ould-Abdallah that spoilers must be dealt with, but only if there is proof of involvement. To that end, Desta asked for evidence of Eritrea sending arms to and/or financing activities within Somalia, particularly related to al-Shabaab. He said "we have no relation with al-Shabaab" and questioned why other African countries that have "gone deep into Somalia" have not been implicated or mentioned in the draft sanctions resolution. Later in the meeting Desta

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came back to the issue, making a passionate plea that "Eritrea has nothing to do with Somalia. It has never sent any arms or finances. We want peace and stability in Somalia. We do not share a border and have no interest."

¶17. (C) Ould-Abdallah told Desta that it was not the SRSG's job to find evidence. He did question the intent, however, of the February 23 statement posted online by the Eritrean Foreign Ministry (which asked all peace loving countries to topple the TFG). Ould-Abdallah admitted that he was not sure whether the statement was "fake" or not.

SRSG'S NON-PAPER ON THE DJIBOUTI AGREEMENT

¶18. (SBU) SRSG Ould-Abdallah distributed a non-paper entitled "Implementation of the Djibouti Agreement," to the Friends of Somalia. (COMMENT: It is unclear whether Ould-Abdallah has shared (or intends to) the non-paper with any other actors. END COMMENT)

BEGIN TEXT OF NON-PAPER: Implementing the Djibouti Agreement (DA) calls for a coherent approach and the strong determination of all those supporting the increased effectiveness of the Government. It aims at pursuing a strategy that combines political discussions, fighting violence, and piracy with a focus on building a functioning Somali government that can gradually take responsibility for governance and security in the country. The implementation of the DA requires the following actions which UNPOS and its partners should undertake:

-- Supporting the Government in four simultaneous areas: security, development (job creation), humanitarian assistance, and Human Rights. Security remains however the main priority--without which the two others would be much less effective and may even have perverse effects. In this connection, the time has come to start initiating direct bilateral economic and financial cooperation between the Government and its development partners. The decades old channeling of all financial resources through multiple trust funds and other payment mechanisms have reached the limit of

their effectiveness and credibility.

-- Working closely with and assisting IGAD, the regional organization, which wields vast influence on local and regional actors and whose concrete support remains essential to stability in Somalia.

-- Mobilizing and delivering additional resources to AU/AMISOM such as increased delivery of better equipment and logistics to improve their capacity for present and future troops.

-- Addressing internal and external spoilers by promoting justice and reconciliation, and combating impunity through targeted sanctions against individuals, organizations, and states in a credible and efficient manner.

-- Renewing efforts to move the International Community from Nairobi to Mogadishu would add to its credibility and would also reinforce stability factors. It should be noted that the AU, LAS, Libya, and Yemen have functioning representations and embassies in Mogadishu.

-- Using the new mechanisms for funding police (training, equipments, salaries, etc) and/or introducing more effectiveness in existing trust funds. END NON-PAPER TEXT.

ERITREA LOBBIES USUN AGAINST SANCTIONS

¶9. (C) Desta's statements echoed his message to Ambassador DiCarlo during a bilateral meeting on November 18 in which he complained that Eritrea is treated unfairly by the Security Council. Desta blamed the U.S. for many of Eritrea's problems, stated that Eritrea is very concerned about possible sanctions, and cautioned that sanctions will "strangle" the Eritrean people.

¶10. (C) Desta told Ambassador DiCarlo that Eritrea wants good relations with the U.S. and that the two countries share the common goal of peace and security in the Horn of Africa.

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Desta listed a number of possible areas of cooperation, including in anti-terrorism and anti-piracy, and the use of Eritrean ports by "the U.S. Marines." Desta stated that Eritrean officials had positive meetings with Ambassador Rice during the opening of the UN General Assembly, and with AF Assistant Secretary Carson in Libya. Ambassador DiCarlo said that the U.S. also seeks a positive relationship but has serious concerns over Eritrea's actions in Somalia and its unwillingness to implement UNSCR 1862 concerning Djibouti.

¶11. (C) Desta emphatically denied any Eritrean role in Somalia and argued that there was no evidence to prove this allegation. According to Desta, Eritrea has "never sent weapons or finance to any insurgent group." Desta said that Eritrea is being sanctioned for "perceptions," and the Eritrean people will suffer. On UNSCR 1862, Desta blasted the U.S. and the Security Council for acting unfairly. Eritrea was open to the UAE's offer to mediate between Eritrea and Djibouti but Djibouti rejected the offer.

¶12. (C) Desta provided Ambassador DiCarlo with a lengthy rendition of U.S.-Eritrean relations and contended that Eritrea has been a "victim of U.S. interests since the 1950s." In particular, Desta said that Eritrea had complied with the 2000 Algiers Agreement with Ethiopia. Ethiopia, not Eritrea, is the problem and the Security Council has a double standard. Desta also complained about the restrictions on Eritrean diplomats in the U.S. and the confiscation of funds from the Eritrean community club.

¶13. (C) Ambassador DiCarlo told Desta that she was aware of a possible request for a meeting with AF Assistant Secretary

Carson. She said that Eritrea should not target the U.S. for all of its problems, and pointed out that the Security Council would be following through on the African Union's and IGAD's call for sanctions. DiCarlo stated that the U.S. takes seriously that Eritrea's neighbors are concerned about its misbehavior in the region, and has information from multiple sources, including the independent Somalia sanctions UN Monitoring Group, that Eritrea has supported the destabilization of Somalia. DiCarlo noted that Eritrea's refusal to issue visas and accept the U.S. Ambassador's credentials contradicts Desta's statements that Eritrea wants to engage in positive dialogue.

¶14. (SBU) Finally, Ambassador DiCarlo told Desta that the two countries should continue to keep the channels of communication open. (NOTE: USUN POLOFF also met with Eritrean counterpart, at Eritrea's request, one day prior to Ambassador DiCarlo's meeting. END NOTE)
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